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TAGS: PGOV PREL PINS UK EI

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE PROCESS "CRISIS"

REFS: (A) FBIS MS1506142395, (B) DUBLIN 2913,  
(C) DUBLIN 2812, (D) DUBLIN 2820, (E) DUBLIN 2778

¶1. (U) PARAGRAPHS CLASSIFIED AS MARKED. OADR FOR  
FOREIGN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION.

#### SUMMARY

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¶2. (C) SINK FEIN LEADERS HAVE AUTHORITATIVELY RULED OUT ANY DECOMMISSIONING OF WEAPONS -- EVEN A SYMBOLIC GESTURE -- UNTIL THE SHAPE OF AN ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS CLEAR, AND HAVE DEMANDED THAT HMG IMMEDIATELY CONVENE ALL-PARTY TALKS. THEY SAID THEIR EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE WITH HMG WAS FINISHED, BUT LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF MEETINGS WITH BRITISH MINISTERS TO PREPARE FOR ALL-PARTY TALKS. SINK FEIN HAS LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO FORGE "PAN-NATIONALIST" CONSENSUS BEHIND ITS POSITION, AND TO ISOLATE THE UNIONISTS AND HMG.

¶3. (S) BRITISH OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED BY THE SUCCESS OF SINK FEIN'S CAMPAIGN, BUT UNSURE HOW THEY CAN COUNTER IT. THEY DO NOT WANT THE PEACE PROCESS TO BECOME STALLED, AND ARE WORRIED BY INTELLIGENCE INDICATING A POTENTIAL SPLIT IN THE IRA IN LATE SUMMER/EARLY AUTUMN. THEY WANT TO MOVE ON ISSUES AT THE TOP OF THE REPUBLICAN GENDA LIKE PRISONERS AND POLICING, BUT SINK FEIN HAS REFUSED TO DISCUSS THEM SERIOUSLY. THE BRITISH INSIST THAT SOME MOVEMENT ON DECOMMISSIONING IS ESSENTIAL IF UNIONISTS AND TORY MP'S ARE TO BE KEPT ON BOARD: THERE CAN BE NO ALL-PARTY TALKS WITHOUT AN UNEQUIVOCAL DEMONSTRATION OF IRA INTENT NOT TO RESUME VIOLENCE. THE OPPOSITION LABOUR PARTY STRONGLY SUPPORTS THIS VIEW.

¶4. (S) THE BRITISH ARE LESS WORRIED THAN THEIR IRISH COUNTERPARTS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A BREAKDOWN IN THE PEACE PROCESS. THEY BELIEVE THE IRA WOULD HAVE LITTLE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR A FULL-SCALE RETURN TO TERRORISM AND THAT A DEFECTON OF ONE OR MORE IRA BRIGADES COULD BE CONTAINED. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THEIR POSITION ON DECOMMISSIONING IS BOTH RIGHT AND POLITICALLY DEFENSIBLE, AND THAT THEY HAVE NO FURTHER ROOM TO MANEUVER. IF THE BRITISH PERSIST, SOMETHING WILL HAVE TO GIVE: EITHER SINK FEIN AND THE IRA WILL FIND A WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO NONVIOLENCE, OR THE PEACE PROCESS WILL BREAK DOWN. END SUMMARY.

#### NO TO DECOMMISSIONING

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¶5. (U) SINK FEIN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SIGNALING FOR OVER A MONTH THAT THE IRA WOULD NOT DECOMMISSION ITS ARMS UNTIL POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS PRODUCED A BLUEPRINT FOR IRELAND'S FUTURE THAT IT FOUND ACCEPTABLE. IN A LONG ARTICLE IN THE JUNE 14 "IRISH TIMES" (REF A), GERRY ADAMS MADE IT OFFICIAL:

-- "THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS DEMANDING THE SURRENDER OF IRA WEAPONS AS A PRECONDITION TO ALL-PARTY PEACE TALKS ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND. THE LOGIC OF THAT POSITION, IF ADHERED TO, IS THAT THERE WILL BE NO INCLUSIVE PEACE TALKS AND NO DEMOCRATIC SETTLEMENT."

-- "IT HAS BEEN ARGUED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS SIMPLY ASKING FOR A SYMBOLIC GESTURE. BUT IT IS A GESTURE WHICH WOULD SYMBOLIZE AN IRA SURRENDER.... THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS, IN EFFECT, DEMANDING THE SURRENDER OF THE IRA."

-- "SINN FEIN CANNOT, AND WILL NOT, INVOLVE ITSELF IN A FUTILE EXERCISE TO BRING ABOUT AN IRA SURRENDER."

16. (U) IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES, SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS, ADAMS AND OTHER SINN FEIN LEADERS REPEATED THIS MESSAGE ENDLESSLY. ON JUNE 17, ADAMS TOLD AN INTERVIEWER THAT A RETURN TO VIOLENCE WAS "ABSOLUTELY" POSSIBLE, BUT DENIED THE NEXT DAY THAT HE HAD INTENDED THIS STATEMENT AS A THREAT. MARTIN MCGUINNESS MADE THE SAME POINTS IN THE ANNUAL WOLFE TONE COMMEMORATION SPEECH JUNE 18 (REF B), CALLING HMG'S INSISTENCE ON AT LEAST TOKEN DECOMMISSIONING "DANGEROUS AND DISHONORABLE," AND A "CYNICAL GAME." ADAMS AND MCGUINNESS INSISTED THAT SINN FEIN AND THE IRA WERE WILLING TO COUNTENANCE DISARMAMENT, BUT ONLY AS PART OF A "UNIVERSAL DECOMMISSIONING OF ARMS, BRITISH AND IRISH, ONCE AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING POLITICAL DISCUSSION AND FRAMEWORK IS AGREED UPON."

#### DEMAND FOR ALL-PARTY TALKS

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17. (U) THE SINN FEIN LEADERS ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THEY WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY MORE "EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE" MEETINGS WITH BRITISH MINISTERS. NATIONAL CHAIRMAN MITCHEL MCLAUGHLIN TOLD THE BBC ON JUNE 12 THAT "WE BELIEVE THAT WE'VE COVERED THOSE ISSUES WHICH WERE RELEVANT AND LEGITIMATE AND NOW IT IS TIME TO MOVE ON TO A COMMITMENT TO OPEN ALL-PARTY TALKS." MCGUINNESS MADE THE SAME POINTS IN HIS JUNE 18 SPEECH.

18. ADAMS, IN HIS "IRISH TIMES" ARTICLE AND WEEKEND INTERVIEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA, ADDED THAT:

-- "ALL-PARTY PEACE TALKS SHOULD BE INITIATED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY AND WITHIN AN AGREED TIME FRAME."

-- "THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO DICTATE THE TERMS OF THIS ACCOMMODATION, NOR CAN IT BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE WHO CAN OR CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS...."

-- "... THE BRITISH HAVE, AS EVER, USED THE CONVENIENT COVER OF THE UNIONISTS. IN DOING SO THEY ARE ENCOURAGING, RATHER THAN DISCOURAGING, UNIONIST INTRANSIGENCE."

#### A FEW LOOPHOLES

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19. (C) DESPITE THE CATEGORICAL TONE OF THE SINN FEIN STATEMENTS, IT MAY PROVE SIGNIFICANT THAT THEY LEFT OPEN A FEW LOOPHOLES THROUGH WHICH THE PARTY MIGHT EVENTUALLY SLIDE OFF ITS HARD-LINE POSITION. THE REJECTIONS OF DECOMMISSIONING GENERALLY SET UP A STRAW MAN TO ATTACK: ADAMS AND MCGUINNESS REJECTED A UNILATERAL SURRENDER OF ALL IRA WEAPONS BEFORE TALKS COULD BEGIN, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THIS IS NOT WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DO.

110. (C) ON DIALOGUE, THE SINN FEIN LEADERS CAREFULLY ALLOWED FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS UNDER ANOTHER NAME. SINCE HMG IS ALREADY CONDUCTING ITS TALKS WITH BOTH UNIONIST PARTIES UNDER VARIOUS DODGES AND LINGUISTIC SUBTERFUGES, THIS NEED NOT BE AN INSUPERABLE OBSTACLE TO CONTINUING THE EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE UNDER A NEW NAME.

#### PAN-NATIONALIST CAMPAIGN

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111. (C) SINN FEIN'S LOBBYING CAMPAIGN TO GENERATE A "PAN-NATIONALIST CONSENSUS" IN SUPPORT OF ITS POSITION HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. IT ECHOES THE PATTERN OF PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS FOR VISAS AND FUNDRAISING PERMISSION, SEEKING FIRST TO WIN OVER SDLP LEADER JOHN

HUME, IRISH OFFICIALS AND FIANNA FAIL, THEN PUTTING PRESSURE THROUGH THEM ON JOHN BRUTON AND DICK SPRING. HUME APPEARS TO BE ON BOARD, THOUGH SDLP DEPUTY LEADER SEAMUS MALLON URGED THE IRA ON JUNE 16 TO "DO THIS THING ON DECOMMISSIONING FOR THE REST OF US, FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AND CALL THE BRITISH BLUFF." REFS C-E INDICATE THAT IRISH OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN WON OVER. SPRING AND BRUTON HAVE WAVERED, AND MEDIA REPORTS INDICATE THAT BRUTON HAS PROPOSED AN ANGLO-IRISH STUDY OF MODALITIES OF DECOMMISSIONING, PRESUMABLY AS A DELAYING TACTIC.

**¶12. (U)** A KEY PART OF THE CAMPAIGN IS TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF OPINION THAT THE BRITISH AND UNIONIST DEMANDS DO NOT MEAN WHAT THEY SAY, THAT DECOMMISSIONING IS BOTH IMPOSSIBLE AND UNREASONABLE, AND THAT HMG IS ISOLATED INTERNATIONALLY. ADAMS WROTE THAT:

- "THERE IS NO INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENT AND CERTAINLY NO PRECEDENT IN IRELAND FOR THE HANDING OVER OF WEAPONS."
- "THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ... WISH TO DEFLECT AND DILUTE THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BY CREATING AN UNNECESSARY AND DIVISIVE ARGUMENT OVER IRA WEAPONS."
- "THEY MAY, IN FACT, WISH TO CAUSE DIVISIONS AND FRACTIONS WITHIN THE IRA ITSELF IN AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERMINE THE STRENGTH OF THE REPUBLICAN POSITION. IN SHORT, THEY WISH TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO."
- "THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND ALL POLITICAL PARTIES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE UNIONISTS HAVE CALLED FOR SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS REFUSING TO TAKE THIS ESSENTIAL STEP AND IS PREVENTING PROGRESS TOWARDS AN AGREED AND LASTING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT."

**¶13. (U)** SIMILARLY, MCLAUGHLIN POINTED TO BRUTON'S INVITATION TO ALL PARTIES TO TALK, AND SAID THIS PROVED THAT HMG WAS "THE OBSTACLE TO AGREEMENT ON PEACE IN IRELAND." AND MCGUINNESS CLAIMED THAT "THE CONCEPT OF ALL-PARTY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IN IRELAND WAS SUPPORTED BY AN EXPECTANT AND WATCHING WORLD. ONLY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT STOOD IN THE WAY OF REAL PEACE TALKS."

**¶14. (C)** IN ALL THESE STATEMENTS, NONE OF THE SINK FEIN SPOKESMEN ACKNOWLEDGED PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CALL AT THE WASHINGTON INVESTMENT CONFERENCE FOR PROGRESS TOWARD DECOMMISSIONING, OR FORMER COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT OSCAR ARIAS' SIMILAR APPEAL FOR PARAMILITARY DISARMAMENT AT A RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE IN BELFAST.

#### BRITISH PERPLEXED

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**¶15. (C)** BRITISH MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS HAVE WATCHED THE SINK FEIN CAMPAIGN DEVELOP, BUT ARE AT A LOSS HOW BEST TO COUNTER IT. THEY BELIEVE THAT THEIR CURRENT POSITION IS BOTH REASONABLE, MORALLY RIGHT AND POLITICALLY DEFENSIBLE. THEY POINT OUT THAT:

- THEY HAVE TAKEN A LONG SERIES OF STEPS TO DEFUSE CONFRONTATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND HAVE MODIFIED THEIR POSITION REPEATEDLY IN ORDER TO FACILITATE COMPROMISE WITH SINK FEIN.
- SINK FEIN AND THE IRA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE OFFERED VIRTUALLY NO SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY SINCE THE CEASEFIRE.
- GENUINE NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT TAKE PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF TERRORIST THREAT AND COERCION.
- THEY DO NOT SEEK A UNILATERAL SURRENDER OF ALL IRA WEAPONS, BUT ONLY A TOKEN DECOMMISSIONING AS A GESTURE OF GOOD FAITH AS PART OF THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS OF PHASED, RECIPROCAL DISARMAMENT IN WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS.

-- THEY ARE ASKING NO MORE OF THE IRA THAN THEY ARE OF THE LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES.

-- THEY HAVE NO FURTHER NEGOTIATING LEEWAY. UNIONISTS OF ALL STRIPES HAVE MADE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT THEY WILL NOT SIT DOWN WITH SINK FEIN WHILE THE IRA REMAINS ON A WAR FOOTING, AND ABANDONING THE DEMAND FOR SOME DECOMMISSIONING WOULD GIVE NEW IMPETUS FOR TORY BACKBENCH DEMANDS FOR MAJOR'S RESIGNATION.

¶16. (C) NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (NIO) OFFICIALS TOLD US JUNE 15 THAT THEY DID NOT INTEND TO LEAVE ADAMS' ARTICLE UNCHALLENGED, AND WERE PREPARING A REPLY TO IT. THEY HOPED THEY COULD SUSTAIN THE SUPPORT OF BRUTON AND SPRING, AS WELL AS THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION.

READY TO MOVE

¶17. (S) WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE THE CLAIM THAT HMG IS TRYING TO STALL PROGRESS ON THE PEACE PROCESS, AS SINK FEIN AND SOME IRISH OFFICIALS SUGGEST. THE BRITISH ARE ANXIOUS TO SUSTAIN THE MOMENTUM GENERATED BY THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE. THEY HAVE OFFERED SINK FEIN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE ANY ISSUE IT WANTS IN THE EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE, AND TO MEET WITH ANY NIO MINISTER ON APPROPRIATE ISSUES -- PUTTING SINK FEIN EFFECTIVELY ON THE SAME FOOTING AS THE NONVIOLENT PARTIES. THEY BELIEVE THE LOYALISTS ARE PREPARED TO MOVE ON DECOMMISSIONING IF THE IRA DOES SO. AND THEY ARE READY TO AUTHORIZE THE WITHDRAWAL OF MORE BRITISH ARMY BATTALIONS AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMIT.

¶18. (S) THE BRITISH ALSO SHARE THE WORRIES OF THEIR IRISH COUNTERPARTS ABOUT A POSSIBLE SPLIT WITHIN THE IRA IF THERE IS NO FURTHER PROGRESS BEFORE THE AUGUST CEASEFIRE. INTELLIGENCE REPORTING ON THIS ISSUE IS MIXED. SOME REPORTS INDICATE THAT ONE OR MORE IRA BRIGADES MAY DEFECT IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER. OTHER REPORTS, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT SUPPORT FOR THE CEASEFIRE IN REPUBLICAN COMMUNITIES CONTINUES TO SOLIDIFY, AND THAT THE IRA WOULD FACE GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN RESUMING FULL-SCALE VIOLENCE.

¶19. (C) FOR THIS REASON, THE BRITISH HAVE BEEN TRYING TO ENGAGE SINK FEIN ON ISSUES PRESUMED TO BE AT THE TOP OF ITS AGENDA: PRISONERS, POLICING, AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION. UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE SINK FEIN HAS REFUSED TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY. A SENIOR NIO OFFICIAL TOLD US JUNE 15 THAT SINK FEIN, WHILE COMPLAINING ABOUT HMG'S "SINGLE ISSUE AGENDA," HAD ITSELF REFUSED TO DISCUSS ANY SUBJECT EXCEPT DECOMMISSIONING (IN ORDER TO REJECT IT).

¶20. (S) THE BRITISH, HOWEVER, DO NOT FULLY SHARE THEIR IRISH COUNTERPARTS' SENSE OF URGENCY. AS NOTED ABOVE, THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE THREAT OF A FULL-SCALE RESUMPTION OF THE IRA'S TERRORIST CAMPAIGN IS CREDIBLE BECAUSE OF THE TRANSFORMATION IN COMMUNITY ATTITUDES. THE DEFECTION OF ONE OR MORE IRA BRIGADES WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE, BUT SHOULD BE CONTAINABLE AND NEED NOT NECESSARILY END THE PEACE PROCESS. THEY ARE MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE IRA WOULD CONDUCT A PARTIAL RESUMPTION OF ITS BOMBING CAMPAIGN IN GREAT BRITAIN ONLY, BUT BELIEVE THAT CAVING IN TO REPUBLICAN DEMANDS NOW WOULD BE BOTH FUTILE AND MORE DANGEROUS IN THE LONG TERM.

OPPOSITION SUPPORT

¶21. (U) JOHN HUME CLAIMED JUNE 19 THAT HMG WAS STALLING ON TALKS BECAUSE OF "INTERNAL SQUABBLING" OVER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. THIS IS NOT OUR ASSESSMENT: THERE IS NO DISSENT WITHIN THE TORY PARTY OVER THE NEED FOR DECOMMISSIONING, AND THE GOVERNMENT ALSO ENJOYS STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTIES. AFTER MEETING FIANNA FAIL LEADER BERTIE AHERNE IN LONDON JUNE 19, LABOUR LEADER TONY BLAIR SAID:

LABOUR ENTIRELY SUPPORTS THE GOVERNMENT'S EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPLORATORY DIALOGUE TO AVOID DEADLOCK IN THE PEACE PROCESS AND THEIR INSISTENCE THAT, BEFORE SUBSTANTIVE TALKS CAN TAKE PLACE, BOTH REPUBLICAN AND LOYALIST REPRESENTATIVES MUST ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF DECOMMISSIONING OF ARMS, AGREE ON THE MEANS AND SIGNAL THE START OF THE PROCESS AS A SIGN OF GOOD FAITH." HE HAS MADE SIMILAR STATEMENTS TO THE AMBASSADOR.

¶22. (C) SHADOW NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY MO MOWLAM REITERATED THIS POSITION TO US JUNE 20. SHE SAID THAT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW ON THE FAR LEFT FRINGE OF THE PARTY, LABOUR ACCEPTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING THE RIGHT LINE ON THE POLITICS OF NORTHERN IRELAND. IF LABOUR CAME TO POWER IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT, BUT ITS POLITICAL POLICY WOULD BE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE CURRENT ONE.

COMMENT

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¶23. (C) WHILE ALL BRITISH OFFICIALS, AND ALL UNIONIST PARTIES, HAVE TOLD US THAT SOME DECOMMISSIONING OF IRA ARMS IS ESSENTIAL IF FURTHER PROGRESS IS TO BE MADE, MOST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT DECOMMISSIONING PER SE IS NOT THE REAL ISSUE. POLICE AND ARMY OFFICIALS HAVE ADMITTED, MORE OR LESS PUBLICLY, THAT THE IRA COULD EASILY REPLACE ANY TOKEN AMOUNT OF AGING WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES IT CHOSE TO GIVE UP AT THIS POINT. ITS MOST DAMAGING ATTACKS IN RECENT YEARS HAVE EMPLOYED HOMEMADE WEAPONS, ON WHICH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES. BUT GETTING RID OF ANY AMOUNT OF WEAPONS, HOWEVER OBSOLETE, WOULD CONSTITUTE THE FIRST GENUINE DEMONSTRATION OF THE INTENT OF THE CURRENT IRA LEADERSHIP NOT TO RESUME THE ARMED CONFLICT. AS CHURCH OF IRELAND PRELATE ROBIN EAMES TOLD THE DUBLIN PEACE FORUM RECENTLY, THE KEY IS FOR THE REPUBLICANS TO FOSTER A CLIMATE OF TRUST "BY SHOWING THAT WE CAN BELIEVE YOUR WORDS."

¶24. (C) WE CAN SEE SEVERAL POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE CURRENT STALEMATE:

- SINN FEIN AND THE IRA COULD CONCLUDE THAT DECOMMISSIONING WAS ESSENTIAL AND BEGIN THE PROCESS. THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT INTERNALLY, AND MIGHT RESULT IN SOME DEFECTIONS, BUT WOULD UNLOCK THE DOOR TO RAPID MOVEMENT ON SEVERAL OTHER FRONTS.
- THE REPUBLICANS COULD FIND AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING THEIR INTENT TO END VIOLENCE FOR GOOD. THEY COULD CONVENE A GENERAL ARMY CONVENTION TO DECLARE AN END TO THE ARMED STRUGGLE, OR ISSUE A UNANIMOUS PROVISIONAL ARMY COUNCIL STATEMENT TO THE SAME EFFECT. THIS WOULD PROBABLY BE ENOUGH TO RENDER THE WEAPONS ISSUE IRRELEVANT IN MOST EYES, BUT MIGHT BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR REPUBLICAN ACTIVISTS TO ACCEPT.
- THE IRA COULD USE THE IMPASSE AS A PRETEXT TO RESUME ITS ARMED CAMPAIGN. THIS IS UNLIKELY, BECAUSE THE COMMUNITY REACTION WOULD RISK FAILURE AND COLLAPSE. MORE LIKELY WOULD BE A LIMITED NUMBER OF DEMONSTRATION BOMBINGS IN ENGLAND.
- HMG COULD CAVE IN, DROP ITS INSISTENCE ON DECOMMISSIONING AND CALL ALL-PARTY TALKS. THE UNIONISTS WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY REJECT NOT ONLY THE TALKS BUT ANY FURTHER DEALINGS WITH THE GOVERNMENT, AND THEIR FRIENDS ON THE TORY BACKBENCHES WOULD REBEL, THUS BRINGING TO AN ABRUPT END THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND POSSIBLY THE MAJOR GOVERNMENT.
- THE STALEMATE COULD CONTINUE FOR MANY MONTHS. IF THE CEASEFIRE HELD (BY NO MEANS A SURE BET), UNIONISTS MIGHT EVENTUALLY ACCEPT SINN FEIN'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND HMG COULD MOVE TOWARD ALL-PARTY TALKS. SINN FEIN COULD TRUMPET THIS AS A

VICTORY, BUT THE RISKS OF LOST MOMENTUM AND RISING  
ANGER ON BOTH SIDES WOULD BE VERY SEVERE.

CROWE